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CHINESE GOVERNMENT HALTS  
MASS MIGRATION OF PEASANTS TO CITIES

[Summary: On 12 April 1953, the government of China issued a directive ordering a halt to the reckless migration of peasants into cities. An editorial published in the Jen-min Jih-pao on 20 April 1953, entitled "Peasants Who Blindly Migrated to the City Must Return Home," discussing this mass movement of peasants, was reprinted in the Hsin-hua Yueh-pao, May 1953. A summary of the editorial follows.]

Since spring of 1953, large groups of peasants have been migrating to the cities. Statistics for April show that over 50,000 peasants went to the cities, and that a great number were still en route. This movement has not only created difficulties in urban centers, and burdened transportation and communication lines, but has also been a serious detriment to spring planting. The leading agencies of the Chinese Communist Party and the Central People's Government are advised to treat this problem with utmost seriousness and carry out the directive of the government to take appropriate measures to put an end to this migration of peasants.

Certain construction units that are recruiting workers in rural villages on their own initiative are primarily responsible for this trouble; therefore, we must strengthen the planning in the mobilization and utilization of construction labor. National economic construction has already begun, and the need to recruit workers from the rural areas will doubtless be increased. Although there are naturally many cadres and peasants, especially young peasants in the villages, who want to go to the city and enter industrial production work, we must recognize that national economic construction must be carried on systematically. A large labor force cannot be assimilated all at once, but must be utilized and mobilized through planning and organization.

Factories, mines, and construction companies should submit a list of the workers they require to labor administrative agencies, where the actual recruiting is arranged. To stop the mass rush to the cities, all local governments should explain to the peasants that migrating to the cities is bad for the country and for the peasants themselves, and encourage and advise them to remain at home for production work. We must educate the hsien and ch'u cadres and broaden the peasants understanding of the exact relationship between industry and agriculture; we must oppose the attitude of disrespect for agriculture.

The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, in a directive on spring planting for party committees on all levels, stated that agricultural production is extremely important for uninterrupted industrial development, and that the level of agricultural production must continually be raised. The directive continued that it is wrong to overlook the importance of agriculture during the present industrial boom, and that industry and agriculture supplement each other. Agriculture is even more important now than it was in the past, because of industry's increased demands for commercial foodstuffs and for industrial raw materials.

Therefore, we must encourage and increase agricultural production. We must educate the peasants and develop the potential energy of the rural surplus labor force, develop a more diversified rural economy, start small-scale water conservation projects, and improve farming techniques. We must build up the fertility of the soil, begin afforestation, improve animal husbandry, and develop supplementary production of marketable goods. The peasants will require aid in the marketing of supplementary and special local products. Depending on the availability of its resources, and government should systematically repair roads, build

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waterways, and construct large-scale water conservation projects. This construction will not only absorb rural labor but will also directly affect the interests of the peasants. Working conditions on these engineering projects will also be improved.

In addition, the policies of the party and the government must be carried out; disregard for the rights of the individual in agriculture must be corrected, and the work methods and habits of the rural cadres must be reformed.

Regarding the disposition of those peasants who are already in the cities, the directive of the Government Administration Council concerning this problem must be put into operation in an orderly and careful manner. Except for those who are actually needed in industry, peasants must return home. Local labor and civil affairs departments should mobilize the peasants for their return to the countryside and municipal party committees should take the lead in this work. The industries which induced the peasants to come to the city are responsible for them, and they should arrange with the peasants' native locality for the best method of sending them home. Party members, Youth Corps members, and cadres who migrated to the city must return to direct the spring crop production. Since spring planting has already begun, any delay will affect crop production and it is urgent that peasants and rural cadres return at once.

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